

IV. SUPPORT FOR A STAFF RIDE TO VICKSBURG

1. Information and Assistance.

a. The Staff Ride Committee of the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth has conducted Vicksburg Staff rides for numerous military groups and can provide advice and assistance on every aspect of the campaign. Resources include files of historical data, detailed knowledge of the campaign and battles, and familiarity with the Vicksburg battlefield park and surrounding areas.

Address: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Combat Studies Institute
ATTN: ATZL-SWI
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-6900

Telephone: DSN: 552-2078
Commercial: (913) 684-2078

Web site: cgsc.army.mil/csi/index.htm

b. The National Park Service, which maintains the Vicksburg National Military Park, can provide advice and assistance to any group desiring to visit the park. In addition, the park historian can help coordinate visits to the sites of the preliminary battles, many of which are on private land. The park also controls a portion of Grant's Canal, on the west side of the Mississippi River. The Visitor Center includes a small museum, bookstore, and restrooms. The *Cairo* museum, located in the north end of the park, features this Civil War ironclad, which was recovered from the Yazoo River, as well as a museum of naval artifacts found on the ship. No other picnic areas or restrooms are available within the park. Although there is a small fee to enter the park, military groups can be exempted. Coordinate group plans with park headquarters in advance of your visit.

Address: Superintendent
Vicksburg National Military Park
3201 Clay Street
Vicksburg, Mississippi 39180

Telephone: (601) 636-0583

Web site: www.nps.gov/vick/index.htm

c. The Grand Gulf Military Monument Park, not affiliated with the National Park Service, maintains the site of the Grand Gulf batteries. Facilities include a small museum, restrooms, picnic and camp areas, as well as several other buildings and displays. No food is available for purchase. Park personnel can assist with brochures and information about this portion of the campaign. Prior coordination, especially for large groups, is recommended.

Address: Grand Gulf Military Monument Park
Route 2, Box 389
Port Gibson, Mississippi 39150

Telephone: (601) 437-5911

Web site: www.grandgulfpark.state.ms.us

2. Logistics.

a. Meals. No facilities exist within the parks themselves, but several restaurants, grocery stores, and fast-food establishments are within a five-minute drive of the Vicksburg Visitor Center. Grand Gulf is in a rural area, as are most of the other campaign battle sites, with no such facilities nearby, although there are fast-food restaurants in Port Gibson. Groups visiting the national battlefield can easily drive to Vicksburg for meals. When visiting the campaign area, however, plan to bring along food and drinks or arrange catering from one of several establishments in Vicksburg.

b. Lodging. Vicksburg offers plentiful hotel and motel accommodations, to include several facilities within walking distance of the Visitor Center. Many motels offer reduced rates for large groups. Camping sites are available at Grand Gulf but not in the Vicksburg National Military Park.

3. Medical. The nearest civilian hospital is in Vicksburg, within minutes of the Visitor Center. During portions of the staff ride, Jackson offers the closest medical facilities. There are no military health care facilities in the immediate area.

4. Other considerations.

a. *Note: Except for those areas preserved within the National Military Park, and state or local parks, much of the Vicksburg campaign area and most of the battlefield sites are in private hands.*

Do not trespass on private property without prior approval from the owner. The Vicksburg National Military Park historian can help with any necessary permissions for military groups.

b. Make provisions for liquids and food since much of the campaign area is rural.

c. Ensure that your group has proper clothing for inclement weather. Violent thunderstorms can occur in any season.

d. Mosquitoes, fire ants, chiggers, and ticks are prevalent from March to November; insect repellent is advised.

e. Maintain good relations with the Vicksburg National Military Park by coordinating unusual requirements well in advance. Be sure to obey the rules.

f. Because of the long driving distances involved when following the progress of the campaign, it is virtually impossible to follow the entire campaign in less than two full days. Plan your driving routes and timetables carefully (the Combat Studies Institute or Vicksburg National Military Park historian can help).

g. Roads and bridges, particularly in the rural areas, are sometimes closed due to flooding or construction. Park personnel at Vicksburg and Grand Gulf can provide up-to-date information on routes.
